

Speech of Mr. Hugo Tolentino Dipp, Partido Revolucionario
Dominicano.

March 19, 1981.

Mr. Chairman of the Movimiento Electoral di Pueblo, members of the
headtable, brothers of the Caribbean, brothers of America,

We shall deal with the subject of "Decolonization and Independence",
addressing our comments to the case of Santo Domingo. This of course
does not mean in any way that we restrict the scenario, nor the
social political phenomenon that deal with the subject, since
that society with all its particular history was developed as a
colony and then as a Republic, responding to the general laws that
guided and still guide the development of the colonies and
republics of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The process of decolonization, looked upon as an effort of certain
social groups to reach a social historical identity and economical
political autonomy, started in Latin America and the Caribbean
after 1493, the time in which Spain started its colonizing acti-
vity in Santo Domingo. Because from 1493 in spite of the over-
flowing process of deculturization and cultural annihilation
carried out by the colonizer, the Indian did everything possible
not to lose his identity and to defend the economical and political
organization that created the existing social relationships within
the system of primitive communities.

The exploitation of the Indian was so cruel and bloody, that at
the end of the 16th century there were very few Indians left of
a population that in 1492 had reached the figure of a half million
human beings. This first occurred in Santo Domingo and was repeated
over and over again in the other islands in the Caribbean. Yet,
the reaction that occurred in some of the tribes after the colonizing
impact of Spain, should be considered as the origin of the process
of decolonization in all Latin America and the Caribbean. The Chief
Bahoruco who for years and years, 14 years, fought Spaniards,
must be recalled as the will of the Indian of Latin America and
the Caribbean to reject the cultural order that Spain wished to
impose upon the people.

During the period of exploitation of Indian labour, they turned
them into slaves and this was exactly the same, not only that the
Indian protest the conditions created by Spanish colonialism, but
some representatives of Spanish religious institutions protested
as well, because they reacted to the cruelty of the colonizer.
During this first stage of the process of decolonization which
goes beyond the order of Santo Domingo to become the original
context of the struggle against the colonial powers in Latin
America and the Caribbean, we also can find Francisco de Vitoria
and Fray Bartolome de las Casas.

This first period of colonialism in Santo Domingo, which occurs
between 1493 and 1533, the latter date is the one that corres-
ponds to the peace treaty signed between Enriquillo and the
representatives of Charles the Fifth. And this treaty created
the foundations for the decolonizing activity of Latin America
and the Caribbean.

The extinction of the Indian put an end in colonies, such as Santo Domingo, Cuba and Puerto Rico, to the extraction of gold. The colonizer at the time then felt that it was necessary to have African labour as a means of facing up to the development of these islands. The African ethnics and the Indian ethnic give a new content to the characteristics of the colonial enterprise and the struggle against colonialism.

In the social stratification of the Caribbean, the African slave became the social class which will negate the cultural patterns of colonialism as great as possible. The black rebellions that occurred one after the other, from the beginning of the presence of Africa in a new world and through all the colonial centuries. During each one of these rebellions quite obviously we could note the decision of the slave to rupture the chains that linked them to the colonial world.

Cimarronage and the flight to the mountains to exiliate themselves from social relationships of slavery became a coloured problem of decolonization, since through the latter the African did everything possible to re-interpret original cultural values with the prospect of liberty in a land that he was just getting to know. Undoubtedly the African through Cimarronage was not able to rupture the ties that linked him to the colonial structures, because in spite of all his will, he was there to extremely strong. He was able to contribute to the creation of the cultural values which would be defined in Santo Domingo and the Caribbean, establishing a national identity, which receive the contributions of all the ethnic people present and the struggle of the classes which this meant to the colonies. The colonizer tried through every means possible to impose a unilateral culture, his own culture. It was not possible, since once both ethnic groups faced each other in the process of the distribution of the world and survival, between them there was an interaction established and a cultural exchange and a historical interdependence, which led to the creation of a new culture of the reality of America, even though giving certain primordality to the first one.

Latin America was linked and conditioned by the relations of capitalistic production, which were expressed for the great deal of vitality in the large economic centres of Europe. The differences that each one of the colonies showed during their development was due mainly to the intensity and form in which the metropolis would impose these things in different areas of domination.

During the last quarter of the 16th century the Caribbean colonies were extremely poor, practically forgotten by Spain. The drop in the sugar prices, the many slave rebellions, the lack of slave labour, the discovery of gold and silver in Mexico were events that led the islands to become an economic burden for the metropolis. The reality would have a special effect on social formation, because when the economy dropped, which was based on slave labour, the violence of slavery decreased, and thus

the violence of racial prejudice. It was only later on and particularly in Cuba and Puerto Rico and other islands when circumstances would lead Spain and other metropolitan centres to revitalize the colonizing enterprise and to create hands tremendously alienating superstructure.

With regard to Santo Domingo during the 16th century the process of decolonization underwent a substantial progress. And this was so because to the degree to which the European capitalism lost interest in the society, the cultural definitions created on the interdependence that existed between the different class interest acquired a nature which contradicted, in general, the cultural metropolitan orientations.

The 17th century and the first decades of the 18th century are in the history of the Latin America and the Caribbean, the matrixes of the origins of the process of, one might say, nativization. This is when we see the national traits appearing in the colonies of America. The process of making the countries native and the national traits that start to appear were manifested in the geography, the language, and cultural traits, which form part of the ideology of all the social classes and these were important factors in the decolonization of the Latin American societies and the Caribbean societies.

The 19th century, in Latin America and part of the Caribbean, was the historical moment of the hope and the need for independence or self determination. What, from the social political point of view, did the movements that promoted Latin American independence have? One may state that these were the expression of societies which fought for the historic category of the nation and the struggled for the establishment of a state, which should respond to the interest of incipient democratic bourgeoisie classes. All this effort was curtailed and hindered by the existence in said societies of economic, social and political forces that were precapitalist in nature.

But not over all Latin America did the movement of independence have the same type of roots, nor were they able to achieve the same goals. There were many Latin American paths taken in the process towards independence, even though the majority of them led to situations that showed the common origin of dependent societies and thus under developed societies. This was so, because commercial capitalism and the industrial capitalism did not act identically in each one of the countries.

In the Caribbean, for example, the struggle for the independence showed peculiarities which can be explained due to the social relationships that had been established by the capitalistic centres. The means of slave production from the colonies, even in Caribbean societies established different traits and these depended upon a way in which that transfer had expressed itself in each society. Since the process of the decolonization and the movement towards independence, were demonstrated in different ways in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, Jamaica, Trinidad, etc.

The process of decolonization after the independence of Santo Domingo, went beyond the organization as an independent state and establishment of a constitution established on the basis of liberalization of capitalist nations. And in the truth is that the colonial structures prevailed in the social economic relationships.

The Dominican development, the attempt for a capitalistic development through the independence, grew and grew within the needs of the hegemonic centres. The sugar industry created at the end of the 19th century, at the beginning of the 20th strengthened what has been called the saw called "development of the under-development", since the capitalistic centres not only dis away with the small landowners and the small farmers, but they did not assimilate the tremendous amount of free labour that that was created by the large sugar cane plantations.

From then on in Santo Domingo and all over Latin America, and other peoples of the Caribbean, the period of the decisive influence of North American imperialism. A dramatic series of events would stress the conduct of neocolonialism of North America, which was the fight against Spain and the occupation of Puerto Rico, the application of the persistence against Cuba, the Monroe doctrine, Roosevelt's stick, "big stick", and the dollar diplomacy, the occupation of Haiti and Central America, etc., etc. In order to stress and organize the relationships with Santo Domingo, the U.S.A. did not stop at intervening militarily in that country in 1916, and then in 1965.

After the first North American intervention in our country, Horacio Vasquez came to power, a popular leader who kept up the same model of development outwards as had existed. By 1930 through a coup d'etat, General Rafael Trujillo came to power. The new Governor was a military formed in the image of the Marine Corps and he worked for them for the economic political apparatus set up by the intervention.

Very quickly it became understood that the only form of preventing his Government from depending upon any sly caprice of the American interests was to create his own economic substance. It was then after the Second World War, with more than a decade governing the country, that the dictator started an economic activity which would be in contradiction with the dependent model. The phenomenon was seen not only in Santo Domingo, it was seen almost all over Latin America and the Caribbean, since it was a normal effect of the reduction of the exports of North America as a result of the war.

At the death of Trujillo, May 1961, the Dominican bourgeoisie was not capable in spite of the fact that Trujillo had left a certain economic census in the country, was not able to play the "pavo" roll that the capitalistic economies was theirs politically. Aware of its weakness the majority of the components of that class turned to the U.S.A. to seek to safeguard their

interests under the protection of the neocolonial model. That is to say, the developments encouraged by Trujillo did not become a stable model. From the political point of view the repressive nature did not allow for the exercise of the traditional freedoms of a democratic bourgeoisie system. The new system ended with Trujillo. There was no structure capable of consolidating a development that would promote certain economic and political independence.

Yet, for the North American hegemonic centre it was necessary in Santo Domingo and in Latin America and the Caribbean, to establish guidelines which would allow for the economical political promotion of certain social classes. The Cuban revolution was a word of warning to the dictatorial regimes. An air of rebellion blew over all Latin America and the Caribbean. And it was only then that it became necessary to seek alternate solutions to those that were traditionally systems of force.

In summary, the plan of President Kennedy of an alliance among certain economic sectors that were called to be the most progressive under the condition of responding to the North American leadership. The Dominican bourgeoisie just as the same in other countries of Latin America, these sectors did not accept the postulates of the alliance progress. And the North American investor did not wish to risk his money in an area that was so convulsed. This proves that the North American investment did not advance under the Government of President Kennedy. The social classes of Latin America and the Caribbean did not give one inch if they were able to benefit from the alliance, nor did the large multinational corporations give an inch, because they had been used to the old new colonial model.

In the elections of 1962 in the Dominican Republic, the revolutionary party of the Dominican Republic triumphed. Juan Bosch was elected. He attempted to take as much advantage as possible from the alliance, but very soon he realized that the alliance was inoperative and that it had been twisted since he had confronted the traditional forces of neocolonialism.

Bosch then wished to orient the country towards a bourgeoisie democracy, trying to stress the responsibilities within a state which for many decades of dictatorship had been going now on the part of liberty and he tried to give validity to the proclamation of national sovereignty. In spite of the measures of economic sanitation Bosch worked for the bourgeoisie that did not understand the favourable opportunity that was being offered to them to develop and to stabilize the country, both economic as well as politically.

The coup d'etat of the 25th of September of 1963 put an end to the first attempt of democracy of the Dominican Revolutionary Party. The political crisis in the Dominican Republic during these years was able to find an outlet on the 24th of April of 1965, provoked by military sectors of the middle class and by the "petit bourgeoisie" oriented by the Dominican Revolutionary Party.

The North American intervention, landing more than 40,000 "marines" in the Dominican Republic, was the immediate response to this popular aspiration of returning to a popular regime and with the possibility of enlarging the social economic and political rights.

With the complete support of the United States, because of the time of the elections of 1966 the interventionist troops were still present in the country, Dr. Joaquin Balaguer won the elections. This Government was in power for twelve years and in it the Dominican people found again the attitudes of the lack of respect towards human rights that were the daily expressions during Trujillo's Government. In spite of the fact that during these twelve years the prices of the export products would reach very high prices in the foreign markets, the mechanisms capable of creating an ample entrepreneurial sector independent of the foreign market was not created. The Dominican Republic lived as many other Latin American and Caribbean countries the great lie of development that defines itself as wanting to substitute imports when really this is not so.

In the Dominican Republic of 1981, and this since the success of the Dominican Revolutionary Party in the elections of 1978, the traditional model of development still exists. Nevertheless, to the benefit of the historical truth it is necessary to say that the Government Program of said party supports a development program that should allow the Dominican people and open expression and a great dynamism, both at the economic, social, cultural, and political level.

The Dominican Revolutionary Party has as its postulates those of social democracy and with the clear awareness that these postulates and principles should be interpreted and adapted to the specific reality of the Dominican society. In other words, the model of democratic socialism to which most of the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean aspire, should have as a basis the historical context that originated in the struggle against colonialism and for the achievement of a complete independence.

On the basis of this approach of the study of our societies it is necessary to prepare and structure our own ideology, that without denying the contributions of the revolutionary doctrines from where that they might come, should respond to the nationalistic tradition and to the struggle for an independent development, an ideology that should speak of substantial changes in the structures of the economic power, but that should also be convinced that man to be real man, should possess his complete capability of freedom and of respect towards the freedom of others.

The unity between ideological content and organizational organization our structure will allow Latin America and the Caribbean to overcome other development by adopting a political and economic framework that will be really oriented to the benefit of all the components of the societies.

The struggle to eliminate under-development and to achieve an independent national personality is dialectically linked to a revolutionary nationalism capable of mobilizing on behalf of social freedom, the marginated classes, the middle classes and sectors of the industrial bourgeoisie. On the basis of this nationalism and in a clear will of overcoming underdevelopment that the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean should orient the national plans that end to recover their own wealth, to struggle for a new international economic order and to establish a balance in the international solidarity.

That is the union of all these criteria ideology, affirmation of the nationalistic vocation and the will to overcome under-development are the main pillars to respectig the originalities of each society achieve the complete independence and complete sovereignty of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.